

# Context:

Southeast Asians & other newcomers in California's classrooms

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**Context** is published five times during the year as a way to provide staff with information and ideas concerning their immigrant, refugee, and sojourner students and parents. While the focus is on Southeast Asians, most articles and resources apply to other newcomer groups as well. District "qualified staff" and others receive a free subscription (contact Nguyet Tham at the Transitional English office). Outside subscribers pay \$10 per year to cover mailing and handling.

Editor:

**Judy Lewis**

Transitional English  
Folsom Cordova USD  
2460 Cordova Lane  
Rancho Cordova  
CA 95670  
Phone (916) 635-6815  
Fax (916) 635-0174  
SEACRC@ns.net

## Cognitive Skills in Cultural Context

In the 1960s, Michael Cole, now a psychology professor at UC San Diego, went to Liberia to find out why Kpelle youth performed at low levels in mathematics despite western-type schooling. The teachers listed the types of difficulties the Kpelle youngsters encountered: couldn't distinguish between geometrical shapes; had perceptual problems; couldn't do puzzles; didn't know how to classify objects into groups; could remember really well, but couldn't apply knowledge to new problems. These observations recalled the early European anthropologists' thinking that the primitive mind was different than the civilized mind. Explanation rested in a deficit model of cultural variations: a person who can't do a jigsaw puzzle must have perceptual problems; a child resorts to rote memory because of cognitive deficiencies, not because school learning requires recall of irrelevant disconnected material.

In visits to the Liberian classrooms, Cole found children remembering long passages of European poetry in English that they could not understand. They evidently thought that math equations, too, were mastered through memorization;  $2 + 6 = ?$  would be learned in a lesson, but when  $3 + 5 = ?$  was presented on a test, the children

protested, saying that was material not covered in class.

However, in everyday life, Kpelle adults could do math. They traded in the marketplace, quickly calculating cost vs. selling price of goods. They out-bargained customers on taxi-fares, quickly calculating miles, road quality, quality of the car's tires, number of passengers, and distance, using a formula that worked to their advantage. They had ways of teaching these skills to their children. Although the Kpelle had difficulty sorting and resorting cards with pictures that differed in size, color, and shape, they had no difficulty categorizing when using



traditional measures of dry rice. Adults and schoolchildren were shown 4 different quantities of rice and asked to estimate how many "kopi" (a unit of measurement) each represented. The adults erred by only one or two percent, compared to American adults, who overestimated the amounts from 30 to 100%.

Thus, when culturally different people performed poorly on a test designed by people from another culture, Cole looked for examples in everyday life in which the same cognitive skills were evident. In a famous experiment, Russian psychologist Labov demonstrated how the situation affects the complexity of a child's language use (1972).

Labov proposed that children who speak black English fail to perform well on standardized tests of language competence because of the test situation, not because of their language deficiencies. To demonstrate his point, Labov arranged for a comparison of language use by an eight-year-old boy, Leon, in three settings.

In the formal test setting, Leon is brought into a room where a large, friendly white interviewer puts a toy on the table in front of him and says, "Tell me everything you can about this." Leon says little, with the friendly tester offering verbal prompts. Leon paused for as long as 20 seconds before making monosyllabic answers. The standard interpretation of this behavior is that Leon has failed to acquire grammatical competence. Labov's interpretation is that the child is actively avoiding saying much in a situation where "anything he says can literally be held against him."

Labov then arranged for a black interviewer, Clarence Robbins, a native of Harlem, to interview Leon at home. The topic this time was street fighting. Thus, the interviewer, the setting, and the topic were all thought to be more familiar and interesting; the results were similar: the adult asked questions and when Leon responded at all, he did so in one-word answers.

In the third situation, Robbins brought

along a supply of potato chips and Leon's best friend, eight-year-old Gregory. He sat down on the floor with the two boys and introduced dangerous words and topics. These changes created a more informal, almost party-like situation in which the power relations between adult and children were changed. The effect of these changes on Leon's speech was dramatic. Not only did he use more than one-word replies to questions, he actively sought his turn, talking excitedly with both his friend and Robbins about street fighting, among other things. On the basis of these observations, Labov concluded that Leon had no difficulty using the English language and displayed a rich variety of grammatical forms typical of black English vernacular.

Labov drew two major conclusions. First, he said that what applied to his test-like situation applied to IQ and reading tests as well. They would underestimate such children's verbal abilities. Second, he emphasized that the social situation is the most important determinant of verbal behavior. Adults who want to assess children's abilities must enter into the right kind of social relationship with the child in order to uncover his/her skills.

However, the norms are all established in school-like situations. To say that Leon demonstrates the same cognitive skills in a the party-like situation, there has to be some assurance that the cognitive tasks are equivalent to those in the test-like situation. The adult (researcher, teacher, school psychologist) has to look for similarity in the tasks' structure, function, and cognitive demands.

Test situations present special difficulties for those being tested even if the child is interested in the topic, is unafraid, and speaks the same language as the tester. The basic problem is that acceptable responses are highly constrained; "someone knows the answer and it's not me," thinks the child. Furthermore, the answer has to be given a correct form "to count," but the child doesn't know what the rules of the game.

Conversations in other settings, by contrast, are more likely to allow shared control of topic, common understanding of the criteria for evaluating an acceptable reply, etc.

Another difference is that teacher-type questions and answers assume that learning is individual and competitive. The child is compared to the mythical "Norm." In an example paraphrased from Cole's account of their afterschool club (an unschool-like environment which was videotaped in order to search for cognitive tasks equivalent to those posed regularly by the classroom teacher or tester) the social aspects of cognitive life in a heterogeneous world become clearer.

Archie was a boy who had been diagnosed as learning disabled, and his teacher expected that he would be a behavior problem in the afterschool club. Examination of the videotape did not show Archie to be at all handicapped in performing well. However, his companion, Reggie, was often involved in interpersonal difficulties.

After being alerted to Archie's learning problems, the observers began to notice that he often depended on others to get information from the written text. His classroom behavior showed that he was very skilled at avoiding being called upon to answer questions. Interactions between Archie and Reggie showed how the adults and children all filled in for one another in a noisy, but tightly woven, division of labor that minimized disruptions in the activity. Reggie was an able reader, but he had trouble maintaining attention and cooperating with Archie. On one occasion, Reggie and Archie were together in a group without the regular third member who was usually the one who helped Archie. At the beginning of the session, Reggie refused to help Archie get the information he needed to make a banana cake. Archie tried to get the information from the adult present, but the adult made up an excuse for not helping and showed annoyance with Archie for failing to "listen the first time." After helping Archie decode a few items, the adult lost

patience and told Archie to figure it out by himself. The other kids were no more helpful, and after several confusions and refusals of help, Archie began to cry.

No sooner did Reggie see Archie crying than he agreed to be helpful. From that moment, a remarkable division of labor began. Reggie, who could read but not pay attention, had the text stuck under his nose when Archie needed information; Archie actively organized Reggie to pay attention so that the banana cake was eventually made. The following week Reggie began by telling Archie that he would cooperate, and the division of labor was replicated.

The ability of people to arrange and rearrange the circumstances under which they carried out an activity emerged as an important feature distinguishing tests from school lessons and school lessons from afterschool club activities.

What is to be learned from this work? First, failure to perform well in a test situation or in a classroom "I've got the answer and I'm waiting to see if you know it" should not be the basis of judgement about a child's lack of abilities. Rather, an educator needs to look into the child's social world to see if there are circumstances under which the same tasks are performed successfully. Second, learning of cognitive skills in social groups are not individual; the learning cannot be separated from the interactions between people.

A social group consists of people, roles, rituals, artifacts, meanings, and shared sacrifice for mutual benefit; all these learned facets taken together form the microculture of a group. The oldest of social links is that between kin. Bonds of friendship or cooperation among students or co-workers replicate kin-like links between unrelated people. Cole's group of undergraduates used concepts of anthropology to design an afterschool program for improving reading comprehension.

Their strategy, called Question-Asking-Reading (QAR), is similar to reciprocal

(continues on page 14)



## Checkpoints for Progress In Reading & Writing for Parents

February 1998

(English checklists through 9th grade are available online at the US Department of Education, parent section)

### Children from Birth to 3 Years

From birth to thirty-six months, most children listen, speak, use the muscles they will need for writing, and get ready for reading.

*Your child...*

- **As a newborn:** Listens and reacts to your voice and other sounds and expresses feelings by cooing, gurgling, smiling, and crying.
- **By eight months:** Plays with sounds and babbles. Can play peek-a-boo. Waves arms and kicks feet to show excitement.
- **By twelve months:** Understands simple words. Understands and reacts to hand movements, faces, and changes in tone of voice. Understands simple words, such as "Da da." Puts books in the mouth. Turns pages of sturdy books.
- **By twenty-four months:** Puts two or more words together to make short sentences. Asks and answers simple questions. Can copy adult sounds, words, and motions. Uses crayons and markers for scribbling

- By thirty-six months: Listens well to stories being read. Likes to play pretend games. Loves to ask "why" questions. Likes naming objects. Makes scribbles that look more like writing.

*How you can help...*

- Talk with your child when you play and do daily activities together.
- Keep washable, nontoxic crayons and markers and paper where your child can reach them.
- Read with your child every day.
- Take books and writing supplies whenever you leave home, so that your child can read and write wherever you go.
- Take your toddler to the library to choose books to read at home.
- Show your child how you read and write every day for fun and to get things done.
- Make a special place in your home where your toddler can read and write.
- Let your child do things without your help, such as dressing and cleaning up, when your child is ready.
- Keep books and other reading materials where your child can reach them.

#### Birth to Eight Months:

*Big Fat Hen*, by Keith Baker  
*Ten, Nine, Eight*, by Molly Bang  
*Play Rhymes*, by Marc Brown  
*Goodnight Moon*, by Margaret Wise Brown  
*Mother Goose*, by Tomie DePaola  
*Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper:*  
*50 Musical Finger Plays*, by Tom Glazer  
*Rosie's Walk*, by Pat Hutchins  
*Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*,  
 by Jack Prelutsky  
*Have You Seen My Duckling?*  
 by Nancy Tafuri  
*My First Mother Goose*,  
 by Rosemary Wells



#### Eight Months to Eighteen Months:

*Moon Bear*, by Frank Asch  
*Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen  
*Corduroy*, by Don Freeman  
*Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill  
*Mama, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara Joose  
*Peter's Chair*, by Ezra Jack Keats  
*Pat the Bunny*, by Dorothy Kunhardt  
*Clap Hands*, by Helen Oxenbury  
*Seven Blind Mice*, by Ed Young  
*"More, More, More" Said the Baby*,  
 by Vera Williams

#### Eighteen to Thirty-Six Months:

*The Little Red Hen*, by Bryon Barton  
*Clifford the Big Red Dog*, by Norman Bridwell  
*Wait Till the Moon is Full*, by Margaret Wise Brown  
*Stellaluna*, by Jannell Cannon  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle  
*Millions of Cats*, by Wanda Gag  
*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, by Bill Martin Jr.,  
 Lois Ehlert  
*Curious George*, by H.A. Rey  
*The Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss  
*The Bunny Planet*, by Rosemary Wells



Hmong mother and child, northern Thailand (top). Daytime rest for women in a village near Khek Noy, Thailand (right). These scenes will be familiar to the older parents who were raised in Laos. American teachers' expectations for what children birth to 3 years do will have to be learned; looking for age-based individual performance is a not universal activity.

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### Cov menyuam hnoob nyoog thaum yug txog rau 3 xyoos

Thaum yug mus txog rau 3 xyoos mas menyuam feem ntau xyaum mloog lus, hais lug, co tes taw npaj kov ub no li uas sau ntawv thiab npaj yuav nyeem ntawv.

#### Koj tus menyuam...

- **Thaum tseem yau:** nws mloog koj hais lus, ua raws koj lub suab thiab yoog raws suab zoo mloog rau nws ua lub ntsej muag luag hnyav los puas quaj ntshai.
- Thaum muaj 8 lub hlis: Nws nyiam hais, ua suab tawm thiab ua si nrog suab, co tes co taw, paub yam lom zem siab thiab tsis lom zem.
- Thaum hnoob nyoog txwm ib xyoos: Nws totaub cov lus yooj yim lawm. Nws ua/co tes taw nrog qhov nws pom thiab hloov suab. Hais tej lo lus tias txiv, niam. Pom ntawv, pom dabtsis los khaws noj ntawm ncauj li. Nthuav ntawv mus los los.
- **Thaum hnoob nyoog 2 xyoos:** Nws paub hais lus ntau ntiv tuaj, yuav hais ob peb los ua ib kab los muaj. Nws xyaum hais thiab yoog raws cov laus tej suab hais lus. Khaws tog pas, cwjmem kos ub kos no rau ub rau no li lawm.
- Thaum hnoob nyoog 3 xyoos: Nws mloog tau lus hais zoo haujsim lawm.

Nws nyiam ua si li tej menyuam xws li tias ua "games." Nyiam nyiam nug tias "yog lica...?" Nug tej npe khoom ub khoom no. Kos raws tej duab uas nws pom ntawm tej lossis tom tej li.

#### Koj yuav pab tau li cas...

- Nquag nrog koj tus menyuam tham pem thaum nws nyiam tham ua si ntawd.
- Npaj muaj ntaub ntawv, cwjmem kom txawm peem rau menyuam tau kos ua si, thaum nws tseem nyiam ua si.
- Nyeem ntawv/hais lus nrog koj tus menyuam txhua txhia hnuv.
- Nqa phau ntawv nrog nraim yus mus qhov ub qhov no es thaum menyuam xav nyeem nws thiaj tau nyeem.
- Coj menyuam mus tom tsev khaws ntawv mus qiv ntawv rau menyuam tau nyeem nyob hauv tsev.
- Qhia nws nyeem ntawv thiab sau ntawv txhua txhia hnuv kom nws paub tias pib lica xaus lica, ua kom lom zem muaj qab hau rau menyuam.
- Npaj muaj lub chaw rau menyuam tau nyeem, sau, thiab saib ntawv.
- Cia menyuam nws ua nws ntau xwb txhob cia yug ua rau nws xws li nraig khoom, tu cev, hnav khaub ncaws.
- Thaum ua si tag pab khaws cov ntaub ntawv thiab khoom cia es thaum menyuam yuav rov qab ua si thiaj muab tau.



Toddlers are incorporated into their older siblings' play groups before they can walk or talk (right, center pictures taken in Thai Hmong villages; left in Rancho Cordova).

The older parents will have a difficult time adopting these recommendations. However, the children who grew up in this country and have since had children will be a good audience for these parenting suggestions.

### Three and Four Years of Age

From three to four years of age, most children explore their world and start to learn how to read and write.

#### Reading

Your child...

- Knows some of the alphabet sounds. Can recognize matching sounds and some printed letters and numbers.
- Understands ideas such as beside, above, under, near, and far.
- Listens, follows directions, and can focus on a specific task.
- Takes turns speaking in a conversation.
- Likes being read to and knows about books.

#### Writing

Your child...

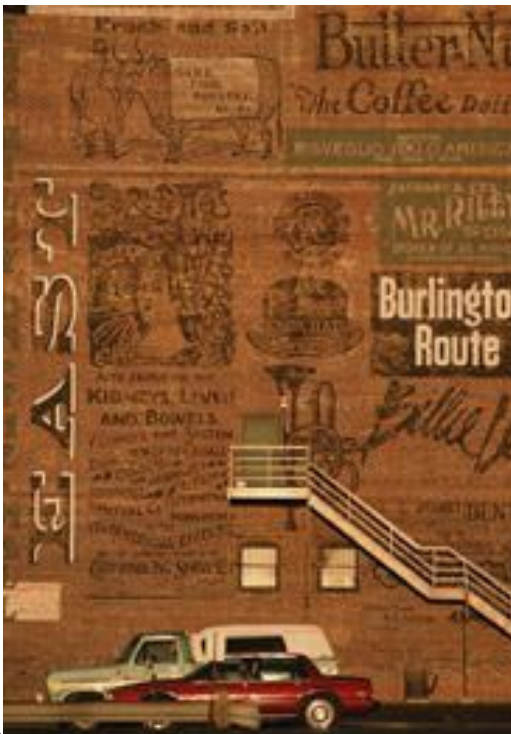
- Starts to understand the connection between spoken and written words.
- Can count, sort, and compare, and knows shapes.
- Holds a pencil or crayon the right way.
- Tries to "write" ideas or notes by scribbling.

#### How you can help...

- Have a regular reading time every day.
- Talk about everyday happenings.
- Explain what you're doing and how things work.
- Visit the library often and take your child to the children's activities there
- Let your child help you with chores that include counting, sorting, measuring, and cooking.
- Sing songs and say nursery rhymes.
- Play games that require following directions, listening, solving problems, and taking turns.
- Give your child the time and materials to color, draw, do puzzles and cut paper.
- Encourage your child when he or she tries to read and write.
- Be a good role model. Show your child that learning is fun and important!

#### Three and Four Years of Age:

*Country Mouse and City Mouse*, by Jan Brett  
*Stone Soup*, by Marcia Brown  
*The Three Bears*, by Paul Galdone  
*The Story of Ferdinand*, by Munro Leaf  
*Make Way for Ducklings*, by Robert McCloskey  
*Tikki, Tikki, Tembo*, by Arlene Mosel  
*The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, by Beatrix Potter  
*Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, by William Steig  
*Lyle, Lyle Crocodile*, by Bernard Waber



Life in America takes place in a print-rich environment, but Laos-born parents attend to these shapes as much as an American-born parent would distinguish between different leaf shapes in the jungles of Southeast Asia.





Thaum nws muaj hnoob nyoog peb mus rau plaub xyoos mas menyuam nyiam xav paub ntau yam thiab pib kawm tias dabtsi yog dabtsi tiag thiab nyiam nyeem thiab sau ntawv heev.

#### *Nyeem ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Paub cov tsiaj ntawv thiab lub suab. Cim xeeb tus ntawv thiab sau ua tej twb tus ntawv lossis lej.
- Paub cov lolus ncaj ncaj tias: ib sab, sab saum, hauv qab, ze lossis deb.
- Mloog thiab ua tau raws li qee yam yooj yim uas nws ua tau.
- Tham lus nyob rau kev sibtham pem.
- Nyiam thiab xav paub txog tej phau ntawv nto npe thiab tseem ceeb.

#### *Sau ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Menyuam yuav paub tias thaum hais lus thiab thaum sau ntawv mas sib txawv.
- Paub suav, xaiv, piv rau, thiab paub txog duab ntau yam.
- Xyaum tuav tus cwjmem kos lossis sau kom raug/yog.
- Paub muab lub tswvyim sau khaws cia rau ntsuab ntaub ntsuab ntawv.

#### *Koj yuav pab lcas...*

- Teem muaj luj caij nyeem ntawv rau txhua txhia hnuv.
- Nrog menyuam tham txog tej xwm txheej tshwv hauv hnuv ntawd.
- Qhia menyuam tias koj ua dabtsi thiab yog li ca yam kod tseem ceeb thiab ua kom tiav.
- Nquag coj menyuam mus tom tsev khaws ntawv mus saib kev ua si, hauj lwm qhia kom menyuam paub tej ntawd.
- Kom menyuam pab yus uas yus tej hauj lwm yam ua nws ua tau thiab xws li tias suav, xaiv ntsuas, thiab ua noj.
- Hu nkauj hais kwv txhiaj nrog nws.
- Nrog nws ua "games." Yam uas yuav pab kom nws xav, mloog, fajseeb, thiab daws yog tias khuam.
- Muab ntaub ntawv rau menyuam kos duab, zas ntawv duab, txiav ntawv, thiab lossis puab ntawv kom tau tej daim duab ua ke.
- Yaum thiab txhawb menyuam thaum nws xyaum nyeem thiab sau ntawv.
- Ua tus yam ntxwv zoo rau menyuam tau xyaum. Qhia menyuam paub tias kev kawm ntawv yog ib yam uas muaj kev lom zem thiab.

#### **Peb Mus Rau Plaub Xyoos (3-4 years)**

In social groups  
(like these Thai boys),  
the younger learn by  
watching the older.



Comparison of Ethnocultural\* Groups: Looking for Patterns, part 2

	Euro-American	American Black African-American	Mexican Mexican-American	Central American Cuban	Puerto Rican
Communication	Infancy: verbal. Early separation (car seat, stroller, swing, etc) Childhood: fact-oriented questions and answers. Adults talk to children and listen to answers.	Childhood: Talk involves feelings and relationships (needs, desires, maintaining social contact.)	Maternal schooling increases the amount of verbal interaction with child and increases the early separation between mother and child.		
Child development	Socialize for independence, cognitive development, self-reliance. Development of full potential. Success, happiness, achievement.	Socialize for survival, interdependence, social roles. Perform social roles in family and group.	Socialize for survival, interdependence, social roles. Perform social roles in family and group.		
Child rearing goal					
Play	Independent, creative. Active, exploring.. Pushing limits. Competitive, win-lose.	Social. Performing, entertaining. Making playthings.	Role-playing.		
Behavior guidance	Adult talk (logic), guilt, natural consequences. Church, religion, commandments.	Proverbs. Fables and stories. Bible. Faith that God will provide direction.	Proverbs, fables, stories. Elders' instruction. Church teachings.		
Discipline	Verbal: logic, guilt, negotiation, overpowering voice, slapping or hitting bottom with open hand, occasionally face, time out, isolation, removal of privileges, restriction to house.	Verbal guidance for relations with others, about appropriate role behavior, especially respect towards elders.	Verbal instruction about appropriate role behavior, especially respect towards others. Switching on bottom or legs okay.		
Child/adult interaction	Logical argument, questioning not considered disrespectful. Questioning, opinions, negotiation, arguing, "talking back" all okay. Respect is in tone and manner. Turn-taking important. Parent uses style similar to that used by teachers in school.	Child's performance redirects adults' disapproval. Every encounter (with peers?) involves some degree of competition for respect; no pre-existing "rules" to govern status/respect; has to be earned and re-earned.	Respect towards elders: listen, don't comment or question. Accommodation of those in US includes allowing questions, opinions about school matters, but not family routines or matters.		
Teaching & learning	Teachers to motivate, explain, guide. Students follow directions, learn from experience. Understands decontextualized messages in English.		Villages: apprenticeship and graduated participation. Towns: verbal interaction between experts and pupils.		
Religion, world view, belief system	Various Christian groups—10 command-ments, faith, hope, charity (love of others), prudence, temperance, courage, justice, mercy, self-sacrifice, forgiveness of sins, repentance. Judaism—10 command-ments plus 603 more. Faith, responsibility for self, community, world, compassion, respect, action, justice. Atone-ment. for sins.	Fundamental Christian groups. Islam—humility, modesty, control of passions, self-discipline, truthfulness, integrity, patience, kindness, honor, respect for parents, charity, generosity, mercy, sympathy, courage, respectful of all life, civic-mindedness.	Roman Catholicism, animism		

\*“Ethnocultural” is JW Berry’s term.

“Ethnic”= culture + history (ancestry and territory)+ self-perception of difference from others. “Cultural group”=people who share a very similar set of learned “unwritten rule:



Filipino	Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese	Cambodian, Lao, Hmong, Mien	East Indian (Hindu) Punjabi (Sikh) Fiji Islands	Pentecostal, Baptist Russian and Ukrainian	Pentecostal Armenian
	Infancy: Tactile (physical contact., strong mother-infant empathy). Not as much need for verbalization.	Infancy: Tactile, physical contact., little verbalization, strong empathy. Childhood: Most talk of daily routine, role, and relationships.			
	Socialize for interdependence and education. Bring honor to group; upward mobility through educational achievement.	Socialize for survival, interdependence, social roles. Perform social roles in family and group.	Socialize for survival, interdependence, social roles.		Perform social roles in family and group.
	Role-playing. Not active or impulsive. Young children not held accountable for misbehavior.	Role-playing. Young children not held accountable for misbehavior.			
	Honor to group, living and dead. Proverbs. Fables and stories.	Honor to group, living and dead. Proverbs. Fables and stories.		Bible. Following the Bible will result in good behavior.	Bible. Following the Bible will result in good behavior.
	Early attention to impulse control. Knuckle rap on the head, switching on back of legs, kneeling, thinking about shame to ancestors, isolation, no dinner, talk to father or uncle. Confucian guides.	Dishonor to group (pay fine to lineage), stand on one foot with arms out to the side (school in Laos), Switching on bottom. No dinner. Go to person and ask for pardon. "Abnormal" kids not accountable.		Bible teachings.	Bible teachings.
	Respect towards elders: listen, don't comment or question.	Respect towards elders: listen, don't comment or question.			
	Teacher imparts knowledge. Students memorize, practice.	Apprenticeship model. Adults show, guide practice. Students mimic, practice, do until acceptable.		Teacher guides practice, corrects. Expectation for homework. Transmission of knowledge model.	
	Buddhism—8-fold noble path: right views, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, moderation/harmony, "making merit." Confucianism—human heartedness, etiquette, ritual, respect for age, status, harmony, "filial piety." Ancestor worship—ancestors' well-being affects the living (family shrine).	Buddhism (Lao, Khmer)  Animism—everything has a spirit; shamans and ritualists. Ancestor worship.  Modified Taoism—Mien.	Hinduism (family shrine)  Sikhism: one God, no caste system. 5 signs of faith and turbans for men.	Literal meaning of the Bible. Belief in prophesy, dreams.	Literal meaning of the Bible. Belief in prophesy, dreams.

## Kindergarten Students

In kindergarten (children five and six years old), most children get better at reading and writing by speaking and getting to know the alphabet, sounds, and words.

### Reading

Your child...

- Understands that print goes from left to right.
- Knows the letters and sounds of the alphabet.
- Knows how to read simple words like the, and, it, and is.
- Starts to read signs, food packages, and other everyday items.
- Likes being read to and has favorite books and stories.

### Writing

Your child...

- Uses scribbling, pictures, and some letters and words to tell a story.
- Writes his or her own name and a few simple words.

- Tries to use letters and sounds he or she knows to start writing things such as lists and invitations.

### How you can help...

- Read out loud and talk or sign about stories every day.
- Take time each day to talk about school and share your day.
- Get your child a library card and go to the library regularly. Request songs and rhymes on tape.
- Have a writing supply box with crayons and paper.
- Watch educational television programs that teach letter sounds and words. Limit other types of TV viewing.
- Read and say or sign nursery rhymes and sing songs together.
- Listen to your child. Ask your child to listen to others.
- Talk with your child's teacher often about your child's work.
- Let your child see you reading for fun.



A child who has successfully mastered these skills will be able to understand the following excerpt when it is read aloud: Retelling a story builds good reading skills.

### Danny and the Dinosaur

by Sid Hoff

The dinosaur covered his eyes. All the children ran to hide. The dinosaur looked and looked but he couldn't find the children. "I give up," he said.

Now it was the dinosaur's turn to hide. The children covered their eyes. The dinosaur hid behind a house. The children found him. He hid behind a sign. The children found him. He hid behind a big gas tank. The children found him again. They found him again and again and again.

Kawm qib pib yog thaum menyuam muaj hnoob nyoog tsib/rau xyoos. Thaum no yog thaum menyuam kawm cov tsiaj ntawv, cov suab ntawv, thiab lolus hais.

#### *Nyeem ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Totaub tias sau ntawv mas yog sau sab laug mus rau sab xis.
- Paub cov tsiaj ntawv thiab cov suab ntawm tej tus tsiaj ntawv.
- Paub nyeem cov lolus yoojyim thiab cov cag lus xws li tias the, and, it, is.
- Pib nyeem tej duab, cim tom tej kev, tej ntawv qhwv khoom lossis lwm yam li lawd.
- Nyiam kom yus nyeem ntawv rau nws mloog xws li dabneeg thiab zaj lus.

#### *Sau ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Menyuam siv duab, tsiaj ntawv coj los sau hais ua tej zaj lus.
- Nws sau nws lub npe thiab tej lo uas nws kawm tau yooj yim.
- Xyaum sau thiab siv tej tsiaj ntawv uas nws sau tau ua tej lolus hais luv luv.

#### *Koj yuav pab menyuam licas...*

- Nrog menyuam tham txog tej cim tom tej kev ua neb pom, thiab nquag nyeem ntawv nrov nrov rau nws hnov txhua txhia hnuv.
- Siv lub sijhawm los nrog menyuam tham txog kev kawm ntawv nyob rau hauv tsev kawm ntawv.
- Mus ua daim ntawv qiv ntawv tom tsev khaws ntawv rau menyuam. Mus qiv ntawv lossis tej suab roj hmab los rau menyuam tau mloog thiab nyeem.
- Muaj tej cwjmem kob qhuav txawm xim rau menyuam tau zas duab ua si.
- Saib TV los saib cov kom qhia saib tej uas pab menyuam nyeem tau tej tsiaj muaj suab, txhob saib lwm hom uas tsis muaj qab hau.
- Nyeem thiab hais tej lolus ua ke lossis hu nkauj los kuj tau.
- Mloog menyuam hais lus thiab teb menyuam tej lus nug kom meej.
- Nrog menyuam tus xibfwb tham saib menyuam nyiam kawm/ua dabtsi tshaj.
- Cia menyuam pab thiab paub tias nyeem ntawv mas yog kev lom zem.

#### **Menyuam Kawm Qib Pib (Kindergarten)**

#### **Books to read**

##### **at Kindergarten:**

*Red Light, Green Light,*  
by Margaret Wise Brown  
*Fox On Wheels,*  
by Edward Marshall  
*Arthur's Reading Race,*  
by Marc Brown  
*Nate the Great,*  
by Marjorie Sharmat



### Third Grade Students

In third grade, most children get better at reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All students read and write every day.

#### Reading

Your child...

- Reads many kinds of children's books.
- Reads for fun, information, and understanding.
- Uses different ways of reading—sounding out words, getting information from the story, and personal knowledge—to understand stories and learn new words.
- Understands the themes or main ideas in what he or she reads

#### Writing

Your child...

- Puts together thoughts and information for writing.
- Uses correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure in final work.
- Includes main ideas, background details, and words that describe in written work.
- Corrects and rewrites work as necessary.

#### How you can help...

- Have a daily family reading time. Take turns reading out loud every day.
- Ask your child to read wherever you go—in the car, grocery store, and park.
- Talk about family and community events.
- Renew your child's library card.
- Visit the library often to check out books.
- Visit your child's school often and ask to see work that shows your child's progress.
- Carefully pick the TV programs your child watches. Watch and talk about TV programs together.
- Talk with your child's teacher and ask how you can help with learning at home
- Use good listening skills. Show your child how to politely listen, watch, and take turns while speaking.
- Give books and magazine subscriptions as gifts.

#### Books to read at 1st grade:

*Amelia Bedelia*, by Peggy Parish  
*Clifford the Big Red Dog*, by Norman Bridwell  
*Freight Train*, by Donald Crews  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle  
*Curious George* by H.A. Rey



#### 1st Grade: Franklin is Bossy

by Paulette Bourgeois

**In his room, Franklin built a castle.**

**He made a cape to be brave in.**

**He made shields and swords and suits of armor.**

**He drew pictures. He played house. He read stories.**

**He played by himself for one whole hour,**

**and then he didn't know what to do.**

**So, Franklin went looking for company.**

**His friends were in the river, cooling off.**



Nyob rau qib peb mas menyuam twb tsimnyog nyeem, sau, hais, thiab mloog tau lus zoo lawm. Txhua tus menyuam nyeem ntawv txhua hnuv.

#### *Nyeem ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Nyeem ntau phau thiab tau hom ntawv.
- Nyeem lom zem, paub, thiab totaub tias hais txog dabtsi.
- Muaj ntau hom kev nyeem. Nyeem nrov thiab ntsiag to, nyeem tej zaj lus. Nyeem kom tau txujci ntxiv, thiab kawm nyeem qhov tshiab ntxiv rau tus kheej.
- Totaub zaj ntawd lossis lub tseem ntsiab tias yog hais dabtsi tiag.

#### *Sau ntawv*

Koj tus menyuam...

- Muab tau tswvyim uake thiab coj los sau ua tej zaj lus.
- Siv tus ntawv kom raug thiab hais raws tus txheej txheem ntawv kev hais, sau ua tej kwab kab mus rau tej zaj lus.
- Hais hauvpaus mus txog ntsis kom muab tau lub ntseem ntsiab zoo.
- Sau tas rov sau dua kom meej mam siv yuav.

### **Second Grade: Curious George**

by H.A. Rey

**The hat had been on the man's head.**

**George thought it would be nice to have it on his own head.**

**He picked it up and put it on.**

**The hat covered George's head.**

**He couldn't see. The man picked him up quickly and popped him into a bag.**

**George was caught. The man with the big yellow hat put George into a little boat, and a sailor rowed them both across the water to a big ship.**

#### *Koj pab tau lcas...*

- Npaj muaj caij nyoog rau tsev neeg los nyeem ntawv. Ib leeg nyeem rau ib leeg mloog ib pliag.
- Kom menyuam nyeem rau koj tsis hais sijhawm nyob hauv tsev, lossis tsav tsheb mus ua si qhovtwg li kom menyuam yeej meem nyeem ntawv tiag.
- Tham txog yus lub zejzox koomntxox rau menyuam thiab nug txog menyuam saib nws xav lcas.
- Coj menyuam yeej meem mus tom tsev khaws ntawv mus qiv ntawv los nyeem tsis tseg tsis tu ncua. Yog menyuam ua tau zoo cia li qhuas nws.
- Nrog tas xibfwb qhia ntawv tham thiab nug nws tias menyuam nyiam kawm dabtsi ntau uas yuav pab menyuam lcas tom tsev thiab.
- Siv sijhawm mloog menyuam hais lus. Ua rau menyuam pom tias koj txaus siab rau yam uas menyuam ua. Tham lus nrog menyuam.
- Muas tej ntaubntawv ntau hom los rau hauv tsev rau menyuam tau nyeem thiab yuav phau ntawv ua khoom plig rau menyuam.

### **Menyuam Kawm Qib Peb**



Rather than learning to read books, Hmong over the past 4,000 years have learned to create and recite elaborate and complex sung poetry. Here a young girl listens to "older siblings" throw and catch courtship verses.

#### **Books to read at 2nd grade:**

*Corduroy*, by Don Freeman

*Ira Sleeps Over*, by Waber Barnard

*Bony-Legs*, by Joanna Cole

*Where is Cuddly Cat?* by June Woodman

*Frog and Toad are Friends*, by Arnold Lobel

*There's an Alligator Under My Bed*, by Mercer Mayer

*Bedtime for Frances*, by Russell Hoban

*Freckle Juice*, by Judy Blume



#### **Books to read at 3rd grade:**

*Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective*,

by Donald J. Sobol

*The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, by Roald Dahl

*The Boxcar Children*, by Gertrude Chandler Warner

*There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, by Louis Sachar

### **Third Grade: Sarah, Plain and Tall**

by Patricia MacLachlan

**I held my breath and floated at last, looking up into the sky, afraid to speak. Crows flew over, three in a row. And I could hear a killdeer in the field. We climbed the bank and dried ourselves and lay in the grass again. The cows watched, their eyes sad in their dinner-plate faces. And I slept, dreaming a perfect dream. The fields had turned to a sea that gleamed like sun on glass. And Sarah was happy.**

(continued from page 3)

reading, but with some differences. In the original reciprocal reading design by Brown and Palinscar, the teacher and student silently read a passage of text and then engaged in a dialogue about it. Together they summarized the text, clarified comprehension questions, asked a question about the main idea, and predicted the next part of the text. The core of the QAR activity was the social group, with its roles and division of labor. As time went by, the individuals came to act as though they were linked by kinship, in that the "family's" "older siblings" invested time and energy in guiding the "younger siblings" to greater proficiency in reading. To begin with, the roles were printed on index cards, and each participant had to fulfill at least one role. The roles were:

The person who *asks about words that are hard to say.*

The person who *asks about words that are hard to understand.*

The person who *asks a question about the main idea* of the passage.

The person who *picks the person* to answer questions asked by others.

The person who *asks about what is going to happen next.*

All the participants had a copy of the text to read, paper and pencil to jot down words, phrases, or notes, and their role cards. The steps in the procedure were written on the board where the answers were recorded. All these artifacts represented tools to be used by the adults who created a structured medium for the development of reading, and by the children to support their participation, even before they knew how to read.

The participants talked about growing up and the role of reading in a grown-up's life. They discussed the difference between growing older and growing up. Reading became a marker of passage from one social age to another. The message was also clear that eventually everyone would "grow up." Reading was not an ongoing test of indi-

vidual cognitive skills.

The activity began with a group discussion of the title of that day's passage. The script was written on the board. The role cards were passed around. This usually caused a lot of excitement about who got which role (the "main idea" role was the least favored, while the "pick the answerer" was the most favored). The text for the day (usually taken from the newspaper) was distributed, one paragraph at a time. The participants (children, instructor, and at least undergraduate or other competent reader) bent over their paragraphs and read them silently. They then went through the steps of developing meaning from the words on the page, a paragraph at a time.

The QAR group was set up to enable poor readers to have "performance before competence," in that they were not required to do the whole act of reading in order to participate. In the beginning, the artifacts and the more competent readers bore the load, but over time the load shifted to the developing readers, and they accepted this as a sign of their growing up. As the group internalized the process, other rituals developed—the timing of snacks, outside time while the quiz was developed, and so on. The QAR group became a microculture—roles, rituals, artifacts, shared meanings, and shared sacrifice for mutual benefit. Children learned by observation, imitation, trial-and-error, and feedback. The role cards and the script reinforced the necessary steps in reading comprehension.

Professor Cole has written a book called *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline* (Harvard University Press, 1996), from which much of this article has been taken. He is available online (mcole@weber.ucsd.edu) and answers his email! An associate of his, Linda Stone, will be starting at CSUS in September. This may present an opportunity for area educators of Hmong, Iu-Mienh, Khmu, and other children and grandchildren of unschooled, non-literate adults. Their situation may not be too different from that of the Kpelle that Cole visited in Liberia thirty years ago.

Hold it! This article is not meant to imply that this approach alone is sufficient. However, as an extended day program or as the application complement to direct instruction, this social approach to learning offers an additional strategy, one that mimics traditional learning patterns.

**Sky Is Falling:  
An Oral History of the CIA's Evacuation  
of the Hmong from Laos**

by Gayle L. Morrison (Editor), McFarland & Company (September 1998), \$39.95 Hardcover  
ISBN: 0786405120

The author has spent years interviewing those who were evacuated during a two-week period of uncertainty when Laos fell to the communists in May 1975.

**I Begin My Life All Over:  
The Hmong and the American  
Immigrant Experience**

Lillian Faderman, Ghia Xiong, Beacon Press, Hardcover, 288 pages, \$25.00 (\$17.50 at amazon.com), ISBN: 0807072346

First person stories of survival and escape from Laos and life in the refugee camps to the disorientation in the new "American jungle."

**Mien Family**

Sara Gogol, Lerner Company: 1996 (Paperback, 56 pages), \$8.95 (\$7.16 at amazon.com), Ages 4-8  
ISBN: 0822597454

Describes the experiences of one Mien family driven from their home in Laos to a new life in Portland, Oregon.

**White Hmong-English Dictionary, rev.**

by Ernest Heimbach, Cornell Univ Southeast Asia (1997), \$18.00 (back order, reprint), ISBN: 0877270759

Reprint of the hard-to-get 1972 edition. Contains over 4900 definitions. Includes a guide to pronunciation, stresses and tone changes as well as useful phrases and proverbs. Identifies Chinese and Thai loan words.

**New Pioneers in the Heartland:  
Hmong Life in Wisconsin  
(New Immigrants Series)**

Jo Ann Koltyk, Nancy Foner  
Allyn & Bacon: 1997 (Paperback, 192 pages, \$15.00)  
ISBN: 0205274129

**What if Prop 227 required schools to  
provide bilingual education classes?**

The recently passed "anti-bilingual education" proposition 227 (Unz) passed with 61% of the vote. Did you read the proposition's full text before you voted? Wouldn't it be ironic if schools that currently offer English immersion (40% of LEP students, according to the Feb 98 Legislative Analyst's report) or nothing at all (30%) were now required to offer bilingual classes when parents and the school staff agree that such a program would provide rapid acquisition of English or general educational development? Could it be that this proposition is in fact a "bilingual education" initiative clothed in "anti-bilingual" sound bites?

The courts will hopefully clarify the constitutional issues and the impact on schools. Meanwhile, take a look:

"Individual **schools** in which **20 students or more of a given grade level** receive a waiver [parental exception waiver] **shall be required** to offer such a class; otherwise, they must allow the students to transfer to a public school in which such a class is offered.

311. Parental exception waivers may be granted for certain LEP students...

(b) ...the **child is age 10 years or older**, and it is the informed **belief of the school principal and educational staff** that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's rapid acquisition of basic English language skills; or

(c) ... the **child already has been placed for a period of not less than thirty days** during that school year in an English language classroom and it is subsequently the **informed belief of the school principal and educational staff** that the child has such special physical, emotional, psychological, or educational needs that an alternate course of educational study would be better suited to the child's overall educational development.

Could it be that Prop 227 not only allows bilingual ed when parents and staff are in agreement, but requires districts to provide it? Hmmmmmm.....



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  - #9613 *Introduction to Vietnamese Culture* (Te, 1996. \$5.00. Carton price \$4.00).
  - #9512 *Handbook for Teaching Armenian Speaking Students*, Avakian, Ghazarian, 1995, 90 pages. \$7.00. No carton discount.
  - #9411 *Parent Involvement in School: A Handbook for Language Minority Parents & School Personnel (Vietnamese Glossary & Summary)*, Huynh Dinh Te, 1994. \$5.00. No carton discount.
  - #9410 *Amerasians from Vietnam: A California Study*, Chung & Le, 1994. \$7.00. No carton discount.
  - #9409 *Proceedings on the Conference on Champa*, 1994. \$7.00. No carton discount.
  - #9308 *Selected Resources: People from Cambodia, Laos & Vietnam*. Lewis, ed. \$5.00. No carton discount.
  - #9207 *Minority Cultures of Laos: Kammu, Lua', Lahu, Hmong, and Mien*. Lewis; Kam Raw, Vang, Elliott, Matisoff, Yang, Crystal, Saepharn. 1992. 402 pages \$15.00 (carton discount \$12.00, 16 per carton)
  - #S8801 *Handbook for Teaching Hmong-Speaking Students* Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, Yang, 1988. \$4.50 (carton discount for lots of 58: \$3.50)
  - #S8802 *Handbook for Teaching Khmer-Speaking Students* Ouk, Huffman, Lewis, 1988. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 40: \$4.50)
  - #S8903 *Handbook for Teaching Lao-Speaking Students* Luangpraseut, Lewis 1989. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 42: \$4.50)
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  - #S8805 *English-Hmong Bilingual Dictionary of School Terminology* Cov Lus Mis Kuj Txhais ua Lus Hmoob Huynh D Te, translated by Lue Vang, 1988. \$2.00 (no carton price)
  - #S9006 *Vietnamese Language Materials Sourcebook* Huynh Dinh Te, 1990. \$2.00 (no carton discount)
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